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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/780,638	02/10/2001	Stephen J. Williams	0225-0032.30	9345

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EXAMINER

BROWN, JENNINE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1743

DATE MAILED: 10/04/2002

5

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/780,638

Applicant(s)

WILLIAMS ET AL.

Examiner

Jennine M. Brown

Art Unit

1743

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-9 and 13-17 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ramsey, et al. (US 5858187).

Ramsey, et al. teach a method and apparatus for injection of a fluorescently tagged liquid sample into a microfluidic device having a channel network as shown in Figure 1 where channels (21, 23) are axially spaced and intersect (26) and second axially spaced channels (21, 25) with another intersection (28). Sample injection is done through sample stacking to focus the sample. Figure 4 A illustrates movement of sample from wells into separation channels and waste by controlling the voltage to upstream and downstream channel portions and side channels. A sharpening of the boundaries of the sample volume at the channel intersection is illustrated in Figure 2. Axial and proximal spacings of said channels are illustrated by Figures 1 and 3, respectively. Electrophoretic separation inherently occurs in a sample with different electrophoretic mobilities, which are based on charge and size of the molecules. Some of these molecules will move slower (trailing) and some of these molecules will move faster (leading) causing separation of the molecules. Ramsey, et al. teach a method of

moving an electrolyte solution in the upstream channel successively through the first through third ports away from the electrolyte channel having the samples converge at the intersecting point and move downward, focusing the sample. (col. 2, l. 4-8; col. 3, l. 34-35; col. 4, l. 66 – col. 5, l. 5, 43-48; col. 7, l. 2, 33-36, 49-51; col. 9, l. 32 – col. 12, l. 43; Figures 1, 2, 4A, 14).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 10-12 and 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramsey, et al. (US 5858187) in view of Chow, et al. (US 6174675).

Ramsey, et al. teach a method and apparatus for injecting liquid sample as described above. Ramsey, et al. do not specifically teach the use of both AC and DC currents to perpendicular (axial) channels. Chow, et al. teach the use of both AC and

DC currents and the use of AC and DC currents applied in a perpendicular method between at least three channels (col. 17, l. 31-63; col. 45, l. 16-33; Figure 19).


It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Ramsey, et al. to use both AC and DC voltage because sample stacking will occur when the current is alternating and a more highly concentrated sample will be separated using a direct current giving a more accurate quantitative result.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jennine M. Brown whose telephone number is (703) 305-0435. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (703) 308-4037. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 879-9310 for regular communications and (703) 872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

jmb
October 1, 2002


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700